DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 146 603 CS 203 721

AUTHOR Fry, Carrol L., Ed.
TITLE Tradition and the Popular Arts.
INSTITUTION Missouri Association of Teachers of English.
PUB DATE Nov 77
NOTE 29p.; The Missouri Association of Teachers of English is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English; Papers from the 1977 Spring Meeting
JOURNAL CIT Missouri English Bulletin; v35 n7 Entire Issue Nov 1977

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Audiovisual Instruction; *Composition (Literary); Elementary Secondary Education; *English Curriculum; English Instruction; Film Production; *Honors Curriculum; *Humanities Instruction; Language Arts; Mass Media; *Popular Culture; *Science Fiction

ABSTRACT

The six papers in this journal issue were presented at the 1977 spring meeting of the Missouri Association of Teachers of English, the theme of which was "Tradition and the Popular Arts." The papers deal with suggestions for texts and equipment for a film-production course; formal writing in the language arts curriculum; the teaching of a mass-media language arts curriculum at the secondary level; teaching science fiction to secondary students; a description of an English honors program at a Missouri high school; and a high school humanities program. (GW)

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Tradition and the Popular Arts

Missouri English Bulletin

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Published by Missouri Association of Teachers of English

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Vol. 35-No. 7 Maryville, MO 64468 November 1, 1977

The *Missouri English Bulletin* is published in January, February, March, April (Journal) May, September, October: (Journal), and November by the Missouri Association of Teachers of English. The *Newsletter* Editor is Dale L. Midland, Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO 64468. Members of N.C.T.E. Information Exchanges agreement. Second class postage paid at Maryville, MO. Membership, including $1.00 subscription for the *Missouri English Bulletin*, $4.00 per year, payable to the Treasurer, James P. Cox, 6608 Arsenal Street, St. Louis, MO 63139. Single copies 50 cents. Address all manuscripts, business correspondence and forms 3679 to Carrol L. Fry, Managing Editor, Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO 64468.

The papers presented in this issue of the **Bulletin** are based on section meetings at the 1977 Spring Meeting, the Theme of which was **Tradition and the Popular Arts**. Due to limitation on space, Dr. Fry's article on creative writing programs and Sister Mary Louis Vandover's discussion of teaching the surveys will appear in a future issue.

GETTING THE FILM PRODUCTION COURSE TOGETHER: SOME SUGGESTIONS ON TEXTS AND EQUIPMENT

by J. Robert Craig

The decade of the 70's has witnessed an increase in the interest of secondary and elementary students, teachers, and administrators in film production as a very personal means of expression. In school districts fortunate enough to have large budgets and a board of education favorable to the more inventive forms of expression, film production courses have become a staple of the curriculum. In many districts, film making may be treated as a unit of study in conjunction with a year-long or semesterly English or mass media course, while in others future Hitchcocks and Bogdanovichs ply their trade under the banner of the school's film club.

No matter what the arrangement might be, someone has to be assigned the job of teaching or advising, and in many cases the "winner" may have only a passing acquaintance with the theory and equipment needed to make the effort successful. What texts are available at a decent price to provide the teacher/adviser and student with a firm background in equipment usage and structuring a film? What minimum equipment should the group have access to? Is the film project economically feasible for both school and student? These are the three basic questions that continue to pop up from faculty members who request consultation on developing film units or clubs in their districts. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to provide some suggestions and possible answers to these questions without requiring anyone to make an overly large red-inked entry in the district's ledger.

It is clear that public school systems tend to emphasize other areas of teaching expertise in their faculty ahead of film production, and in many cases one's proficiency in film is assigned by a principal rather than gained by personal experience. What sources, then, are available to the faculty member to enable him/her to stay a jump or two ahead of the kids? Fortunately, two of the most readable, easily understood, and useful texts available are also relatively inexpensive. Edward Pincus' paperback **Guide to Filmmaking** (Signet Books, 1301 Avenue of Americas, N.Y., N.Y.) provides just about everything one needs to know (and then some) about lens settings, cameras, editing, splicing, film stock characteristics, lighting, and production terminology. At less than $2.00 this is a difficult aid to pass by, especially since it covers both of the eight millimeter formats and the larger sixteen millimeter size equally well.

For a simple yet well-developed explanation of how to put a narrative film together, it's still hard to beat **How to Shoot a Movie Story,** by Arthur Gaskill and David Englander (Morgan, Morgan, Inc., Hastings-on Hudson, N. Y.). Published in 1960, this handy little guide takes the

reader from the construction of a basic three-shot sequence to its expansion into complete scenes. It also gives information on panning, handling the zoom lens, directional continuity, the use of different camera angles, how to build a scene to a climax, and some encouraging words to the novice filmmaker. Selling for about $3.50, this is one of those hardy perennials that has stood up to the test of time and remains as a valuable reference.

A little higher on the price scale (at about $8.00) is **Personal Filmmaking** by James Piper (Reston Publishing Company, Reston, Virginia) which was written specifically for the student filmmaker working the super eight equipment. In addition to a thorough coverage of all the basics on equipment usage, filming, and editing, this volume describes a number of useful ideas on film structure and continuity for the types of projects students tend to become involved with. This would be a good choice for the class text as well as serving as a specific reference for super eight production.

These three books serve only as an introduction to the field for as any faculty member who has been looking into texts can relate, the film production and study area has recently exploded with new titles. The trick is to adopt those that best fit the needs of each district's program.

The teacher's other main concern lies in the area of equipment and whether or not there are any funds budgeted for even the bare essentials.

Before we begin this discussion, it might be wise to describe the different film formats most often available to student producers. The home movie field first began following World War II when sixteen millimeter film and equipment was touted as the amateur's medium. The film is sixteen millimeters wide, the clarity of the picture is very good, and the equipment is both bulky and expensive. This format remains in use as the primary stock for the rental films kept by most district film libraries.

Not long after the start of the fifties, standard eight millimeter film became the home enthusiast's medium. Much more compact than its sixteen millimeter counterpart, standard eight revolutionized the amateur market, even though many purists decried its small frame size which resulted in a picture that was much less sharp than that produced in sixteen.

Finally, in the early sixties the film industry perfected the super eight format by changing the arrangement of the sprocket holes which allowed for a frame one-third again as large as that of a standard eight frame. The resulting improvement in the clarity and sharpness of the picture has led to super eight's dominance of the home movie market.

In looking for equipment, whether to buy or borrow, it's important to be sure that it's all of the same format. In districts where film budgets are either very low or nonexistent, the class members become wheeler-dealers and scavengers, tracking down cameras, editors, splicers, and lights for use by the group. Sometimes this works and sometimes it doesn't, as witness the school that ended up with two super eight cameras, a standard eight editor, and an old sixteen millimeter splicer. Usually, however, this type of collection proves the exception rather than the rule, as in most areas one of the two eight millimeter formats abounds. With some time spent studying the theory of narrative film construction and the purchase of some film, the group is on its way. While this may appear to be a bit on the patchwork side, many excellent projects have resulted from just such a combination of equipment.

If the district is blessed with a budget for equipment, the faculty member should keep in mind that high priced equipment doesn't guarantee quality films. The truth of this maxim is probably most evident when cameras are chosen. It's easy to be overwhelmed by low-light capabilities, multiple shooting speeds, fading controls, automatic exposure, and (the bane of many film teachers) the wide-ratio zoom lens. Indeed, a compelling case can be made for buying relatively inexpensive cameras with fixed focal-length lenses and manual exposure settings so that the students more fully appreciate the relationship of f-stop numbers to such things as the amount of light available and the depth of field of each particular shot.* On top of that, fixed focal-length lens cameras challenge fledgling filmmakers to create scenes and shots that exhibit self-contained movement, utilize different angles, and vary the image size of their shots instead of relying on zooming in and out on a character to provide morement. This type of filming produces a bodily reaction similar to seasickness and can cause the viewing area to become rather messy without the efforts of a stouthearted custodial staff.

It's difficult to set down a list of "must-have" features when discussing cameras in an article like this. Standard eight millimeter cameras are usually older than their super eight counterparts and lack many of the features found on these current-day models. Look for a standard eight camera to have a spring-driven motor (which requires winding and can stop in the middle of long takes), a fixed focal-length lens (requiring manual exposure settings after reading the light intensity with a light meter), and manual film loading (after shooting twenty-five feet the roll has to be taken out of the camera, reversed, and reloaded). In comparison, a super eight camera should include a battery driven motor, cartridge film loading, a low light indicator, and an orange daylight filter which can be removed for indoor use. As the price scale increases, such items as zoom lenses, variable speeds for slow and fast motion, viewing through the camera's lens system, and manual f-stop settings, manual

*See "A Film Production Course" by Myles P. Breen and Ruth E. Higgins, **The Speech Teacher** (March, 1975), XXIV, 100-106.

focusing, fade controls, and the capability for shooting in low light situations will appear.*

It is unlikely that a sixteen millimeter camera will be available, but if one turns up look for the features of the standard eight camera along with a turret to hold three fixed focal-length lenses. Also be aware that the size of these cameras makes them much more difficult to hand hold and maneuver, often necessitating a tripod.

As the faculty member(s) and students begin to become more involved with film, their equipment awareness also increases and tastes become finicky. Camerawise, this can be a problem, but the primary goal is simple: have something that gets the job done with relative ease and don't be overly concerned with the frills.

There are several other pieces of equipment necessary besides the camera. If the class intends to shoot much of its footage indoors, it's a good idea to look into possible lighting sources, since if none are available a new script must be written or the settings of some of the scenes changed.

One popular form of lighting is the light bar, which is simply that: a bar with several sockets which hold photoflood lightbulbs to provide enough illumination for the shot. Light bars can be either hand held or attached to the camera, depending on their size and the type of shooting being done. Its disadvantage is that it concentrates a high level of light on one spot, often making it difficult for the actors to keep from squinting. In addition, the bar must be held steady or the illumination will jump and flicker, distracting from the action of the scene.

One method of avoiding these problems entails using the auditorium stage as a studio for interior shots. This can be particularly effective for projects that don't require exacting, realistic sets or which can be shot against a neutral, limbo-like background. In some cases, interior filming can be coordinated with the presentation of school plays and the sets from these productions put to double use. If all else fails, scour the district, for a low-light camera which is equipped with a wide shutter to permit filming without additional lighting.

After the film has been shot and processed, the scenes must be edited together so the shots follow each other in logical order. For this operation, the class will need an editor to view the film on and mark it for cutting and a splicer to join the cut segments in sequence. Once again, it won't hurt to see if an editor is available through a family whose son or daughter is in the class, as editors under $30.00 aren't very plentiful. On the other hand, it may be worth the $30.00-$80.00 price to know that if an accident occurs it's school equipment that's been damaged instead of someone's personal editor that was given him by a beloved uncle. Editors in this price range don't vary a great deal, so concentrate on buying one that produces a clear picture on its screen and has a minimum of plastic parts.

*A more detailed discussion of super eight cameras can be found in "Choosing a Camera", by Robert Craig, **Missouri Speech Journal** (1975), pp. 30-32.

Splicers come in all sorts of sizes and shapes and use either cement or a clear tape to bind the film ends together. Since many film companies are switching to a film base that doesn't adhere to cement, it's advisable to go the tape route. Both Kodak and Baia make economical tape splicers for under $15.00 with the Baia 500 model selling for less than $5.00. All of these models use pre-packaged tapes that can be found in most film, drug, or discount stores and the procedure for making the splices is simplicity itself. The only disadvantage to tape splicers is that some of them make an S cut that sometimes comes loose after repeated projections and causes a flash in the middle of the cut frames, so it's necessary to balance this aesthetic aspect against price if a choice has to be made.

These, then, are some of the points to consider when choosing texts and equipment for a particular school district. This article has tried to outline some suggestions which should help each individual program get off the ground. Hopefully, these programs will produce films worthy of being shown at a school premier night where the students can sit down alongside their parents, school board members, and administrators to view the fruits of studying this powerful method of expression.

FORMAL WRITING IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

by Marlow Ediger

There are diverse schools of thought pertaining to the kinds of learning activities available to guide pupils in developing optimal achievement in formal writing. Teachers and supervisors need to study, appraise, and ultimately implement relevant, desirable strands from these guiding schools of thought.

Experimentalism and the Curriculum

Experimentalism as a philosophy of education has much to recommend itself in terms of providing for individual differences. Thus, for example, in the writing of business letters, advocates of experimentalism would recommend that pupils feel a need for this kind of learning activity. Learners, with teacher guidance, may perceive purpose in writing business letters to order needed pictures or obtain data pertaining to an ongoing unit of study. At that specific time, pupils would learn to write appropriate business letters in order to communicate needed content effectively. These letters will actually be mailed and responses to each letter will be expected by pupils. This learning activity may well include problem solving situations in that pupils may well determine what makes for a good business letter

to communicate wants in an effective manner. Learners may well work in committee settings to develop and complete these business letters. Subject matter and skills (in this case, writing business letters) then are learned as the need arises.

Experimentalism would not emphasize the following:

1. Pupils writing business letters due to the next lesson in a language arts textbook emphasizing this kind of learning activity.

2. Teachers alone determining what pupils are to learn (objectives) as well as related learning activities to achieve desired ends.

Behaviorism and the Curriculum

Behaviorism or S--R theory of learning may take two forms. Thus, content for learners in writing business letters could be programmed. In the use of programmed textbooks, pupils may read one or several sentences, respond to a related completion item, and then check the completed completion item with the correct response as given by the programmer. Reinforcement of the learner's response is involved if it was correct. If the pupil's response is incorrect, he/she now knows the correct answer. Both learners are then ready to move on to the next sequential item following the same sequence in learning--read, respond, and check. The following ideas are basic in the use of programmed books:

1. The programmer determines what pupils are to learn (objectives).

2. The programmer also determines the order or sequence of learning experiences.

3. The sequential steps are small; thus pupils generally experience continuous success in learning if readiness to utilize these materials is in evidence.

4. The programmer determines which is the correct answer to utilize in appraising pupils's responses in each sequential step of learning.

Programmed textbooks do not stress:

1. Input from pupils in curriculum planning.

2. Creative and critical thinking on the part of learners.

S--R theory of learning may also be implemented through the use of measurable objectives. These objectives are generally stated by the teacher prior to teaching a given lesson. Thus, for example, the teacher in a specific lesson could orient pupils to new learnings by stating that today's goal will be to write a business letter. The minimal level of achievement may even be stated in the objective--to write a business letter containing no more than three errors. Hopefully, selected pupils will achieve beyond what is stated in the objective. Measurable objectives would be reasonable in terms of what learners can attain within a specific period of time.

After the teacher has announced the purpose of a lesson (or lessons), learning activities would be provided. These learning experiences could involve seeing models of business letters on the chalkboard or on a transparency and viewing of actual business letters, using the opaque projector. After an adequate number of models have been viewed and the salient parts of each noticed, learners may then practice writing a business letter using proper form and style. The teacher, of course, may notice when pupils are ready to be evaluated, in their final written product, against the standard of the previously stated measurable objective--to write a business letter with no more than three errors. Pupils who have not attained this standard, of course, would need additional learning activities pertaining to the writing of a business letter.

Measurable objectives, then, would generally emphasize:

1. The teacher stating in advance, prior to teaching, the precise goal (or goals) learners are to attain.

2. Learning activities which aid pupils in achieving the stated measurable objective only.

3. Learner achievement that is measured as soon as the teacher sees objective evidence that a learner can write a business letter with no more than three errors.

The Basics in the Curriculum

Emphasizing the basics, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, has received considerable attention in the school curriculum. Reading and writing, of course, cut across many diverse curriculum areas including science and health, mathematics and social studies.

Reasons given for placing much emphasis upon these basics include the following:

1. Pupils are not learning to read, write, and compute in a proficient manner.

2. Standardized test scores, in many cases, indicate that learners are not achieving at a level commensurate with pupils, for example, of ten years ago.

3. Employers notice that employees lack knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

School systems that value highly the basics in the curriculum may stress the following criteria:

1. Pupils do not need to perceive purpose or intent to learn in the areas of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

2. Proper discipline in the class setting is important. A lack of good discipline has made for a lack of achievement by pupils.

3. The teacher should determine what pupils are to learn (the objectives), the means of achieving desired ends (learning activities), as well as methods of appraising progress.

4. Reputable textbooks and workbooks may well provide desirable sequential learnings for pupils.

5. Social promotion of pupils is to be frowned upon. Definite standards need to be achieved by each learner in the school-class setting.

Thus, in the area of business letter writing, a basics curriculum would emphasize that pupils thoroughly know the inherent parts (heading, inside address, greeting, body, closing, and signature). Pupils, of course, must also utilize the accumulated knowledge in being able to write acceptable business letters. The basics in the curriculum concept in teaching pupils, no doubt, may well emphasize a no nonsense approach in having pupils achieve stated objectives.

Humanism and the Curriculum

Humanists lack the certainty that behaviorists and the curriculum people have pertaining to what pupils should learn. To have a humane learning environment, humanists would stress the following:

1. Pupils should have ample opportunities to select what to learn (objectives) as well as choose, from among alternatives, relevant learning experiences.

2. Creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving are important ends for pupils to attain.

3. Feelings of mutual trust are highly important attitudinal ends to emphasize in the school curriculum.

4. Cooperation among learners, not competition, is highly desirable in terms of pupil learning.

5. Learning is its own reward. Extrinsic rewards such as prizes, tokens, and stars on a chart for improved performance are definitely not recommended.

6. The feelings of learners individually need to receive adequate attention in the school curriculum and in the curriculum of life.

To further emphasize the thinking of humanists, A. H. Maslow stressed the following as being important in hierarchical form when thinking of meeting the needs of learners in school and society:

1. Psychological needs of individuals, such as adequate food, rest, clothing, and proper temperature readings in the school-class environment

2. Safety needs

3. Love and belonging needs

4. Esteem needs

5. Self-Actualization

These needs would be followed, in importance, by the need to know and understand. The latter may include the writing of business letters. Thus, in a humane learning environment, according to humanists, the total pupil needs to be considered in terms of providing for needs on a hierarchical basis.

In Summary

There are diverse schools of thought in education pertaining to guiding learners to attain optimal development in the various curriculum areas in the school-class setting. Teachers and supervisors need to appraise tenets of each of these schools of thought and implement perceived criteria or standards.

THE TEACHING OF MASS MEDIA LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

by Robert Bohlken

Two of the most commonly accepted educational objectives for English/Language Arts Programs at the secondary level are (1) helping the student develop a skill in his language usage and (2) helping the student develop an understanding and appreciation of his language as expressed in writing and speaking.

These two objectives have in the past been taught primarily on a person-to-person basis using both written and spoken expression, with the emphasis on prescribed, written language standards and qualities. Little emphasis in either course content or method has been placed on the means, or media, by which the language is communicated.

However, in recent years, due to contributions by technical and scientific discoveries, and by a philosophy espoused by Marshall McLuhan, more attention has been given to media. McLuhan has indicated "the medium is the message." Whether or not this statement is totally acceptable and completely accurate is immaterial, but the need to understand media in relationship to language is very evident if language skill, knowledge, and appreciation are to be improved.

Media, meaning "means of communicating within the communication process," are becoming important parts in the language arts study and are used as a teaching method as well as being studied in themselves as the means by which we communicate. The "medium" as an important part of the communication process is distinguished from "channel" which describes the physical elements including light waves, sound waves, wire and electrical waves, temporal waves, etc. and from "message" which is the content or language. The channel and the message are included in the medium. The term "medium" refers to the psychological and physical origin and processing of the message which includes the channel. Media includes print, graphics, radio, television, telephone, person-to-person, group discussion, public speaking, etc. Mass media then can be defined as the means by which a verbal message is communicated to a large heterogeneous group by using technical reproduction, transmission, or amplification. Mass media include print and graphics, magazines and books, film, and the broadcast media. In broadcasting the channel becomes radio waves and wires which "cast" the message electronically in multi directions. Broadcast media include radio and television. It is unfortunate if teachers of language arts at the secondary level do not recognize that much of the language usage in our society today occurs through and is influenced by radio and TV and that the media of broadcasting are essential parts of our language study. However, it is important to realize that (1) broadcast equipment, real or simulated is expensive; (2) the teacher must have some technical knowledge and aptitude; and (3) the teaching perspective needs to be developed.

An audio production console, including mounting table, two turn tables with tone arms and phono cartridges, five mixers, fourteen channel inputs and outputs of program, monitor, cue, phones, and P. A., will cost over $1400.00 For classroom TV and perhaps cable production, a ½ inch VTR system is adequate. The recorder, camera, and monitor sell for over $1500.00 This is expensive equipment, but it is versatile and can be shared by several schools as well as classrooms.

Naturally if this broadcast equipment is used the teacher must understand the operation and principles of the equipment. Even if equipment is limited, the teacher needs some insight into the physics of signal transmission and the basic operation of the equipment. Field trips may substitute for lack of equipment but will not answer the many questions the students will have.

The third consideration necessary before incorporation of a broadcast unit or course in the language arts program is the teaching perspective. One justifiable teaching perspective for incorporating a unit on broadcast media within the language arts department is to aid the student develop skill in his language usage through encouraging his creative verbal expression, both written and spoken. From this language skill perspective, the principle of broadcasting is explained, but the skill in operating equipment and technical aspects is not promoted or emphasized. The equipment usage is primarily a teaching aid, method, and incentive. From this perspective, the teacher encourages the student's written and oral expression by using the equipment, the idea, and the glamour of broadcasting. The microphone, the camera, the amplification and distribution of an individual's language enhance the language usage standards and are the incentive for the production and expression of that language. The students use their skills in reading and writing and interpreting language with the idea that they are being observed or heard by numerous people other than the teacher and that their language is being evaluated not only by an instructor but also by their peers. The written expression is involved in rewriting news or writing news stories and news commentary, developing transitions and continuity between particular musical numbers, writing and producing narrative with dialogue in short dramas or advertising commercials. The student is given numerous opportunities to verbally express himself in writing and speaking, formally and informally. This approach encourages students to increase their vocabulary, review their language syntax and diction in describing sporting events, news events, or persuasive messages which they may develop. It also aids in the teaching of interview questioning and adapting the writing of others for oral interpretation.

Another teaching perspective for incorporating the unit or a course in broadcast media in the language arts department is from the appreciation view point. There is no question that radio and television are significant

affectors of our society and that this influence needs to be appreciated as well as our presently taught appreciation of novels, short stories, prose, and poetry. This perspective does not require equipment and requires less technical knowledge on the part of the teacher. It would study the history of the commercial radio and television broadcast system within the U. S. and compare it with other systems. It would study the technical development, economics, programming, responsibilities, and control. This perspective would be organized either chronologically or topically with the goal being that helping the student develop his knowledge and appreciation of the social, cultural, psychological, and economical influences of broadcast media. It also could include analysis of current programming, its purpose and its effects, the language, the regulations, and the social, political, and economic influences of radio and television in the United States. It would analyze the society by describing and analyzing why an audience listens or experiences a particular medium. The means of acquiring and analyzing feedback or reciprocation of a verbal message that is produced and disseminated through the media of radio or television would be important to study from this perspective.

The third perspective, and perhaps the least valid, of teaching broadcast media within the language arts department is as a developer of skill in technical broadcasting. The perspective emphasizes preparation for the FCC third-class license and limited training of disc jockeys for the broadcast profession itself. This perspective assumes that a high school student is mature and knowledgeable enough to serve as a model in language and philosophy for the mass audiences because he has enough meager technical knowledge to acquire a broadcast license. The major teaching method and procedure from this perspective would be a hands-on equipment and program learning materials where students learn about the equipment without learning about its true value, responsibilities and social importance of broadcasting.

Broadcast media play important parts in our verbal communication and our society today and certainly should be incorporated in a language arts program, but its incorporation should be based on availability of equipment, the teacher's technical knowledge, and the teaching perspective. The teaching perspective should not stress technical skill, but rather should develop verbal language skill or knowledge, or it should develop appreciation of broadcasting and the influence it has upon those students and their society.

To learn more about broadcasting programs at the secondary schools, one can obtain a book entitled **Radio, Television and Film in the Secondary School** produced by the Michigan Speech Association and published by the National Textbook company, Skokie, Illinois, 60076. Two excellent reference sources for an introduction to the technical production, traffic operations, theories, station organization, and regulations are **Air time,** written by Ronald Seidle and published by Holbrook Press, Boston,

Mass., and **Television and Radio**, written by G. Chester, G. Garrison, and E. Willis and published by Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York. A recommended reference in regard to history of broadcasting is **A Source Book on the History of Radio and Television**, written by Lawrence Lichty and Malachi Topping, published by Hastings House, 10 East 40th Street, New York. Two references for systems and effects of broadcasting are **Mass Media**, written by Robert Glessing and William White and published by Science Research Associates, Inc., and **Mass Media**, written by W. P. Davison, J. Boylan, and F. T. C. Yu and published by Praeger of New York. An excellent text on theory is **Theories of Mass Communication**, written by Melvin DeFleur and S. B. Rokeach and published by David McKay Co, New York.

SCIENCE FICTION: NO TIME LIKE THE PAST/PRESENT/FUTURE

by Dean Ing

Several seasons ago, I began teaching a course in media writing to university students. I was awash with optimism over student scripts which--I was sure--would emerge like terriers, rending at old problems with clean new teeth. Most of the plots centered on political in-fighting or alienation of the individual; I could hardly wait for the end of the semester. In short, there was no time like the future.

Midway through the course, preliminary script outlines proved to me that, in discussing motivation of characters, I had assumed too much. For most of my budding Chayevskys it was enough to assert that the villain wanted the President's scalp, with no hint of the embattled notions that underlie social events. Well, I thought, it's time for class sessions to pinpoint individual and social motives that make the world what it is. There was no time, I decided, like the present.

These motivation sessions provoked a satisfying deluge of intelligent argument, questions, and even a few hesitant tries at new answers. This atmosphere seemed heady stuff to many who, evidently, had rarely been prodded to consider the underlying motives of social outcomes of, e. g., General Motors, Captain Kangaroo, or corporal punishment. We probably made some progress, judging by a few tacked-on motivations that trundled like cabooses behind the story lines.

Of course there were some well-developed motives, a few valid issues broached, a couple of ingenious resolutions offered. At that point, sitting beside a foot-high stack of scripts at semester's end, I realized that the ingenious alternatives were from people who leaned toward science fiction. Discounting my possible bias--though I tend to be more critical on

my own science-fictional turf--I concluded that early exposure to fantasy and especially s. f. is invaluable to youth. The genre seems to provide young people with insights into society's problems. It does more: it provokes them to consider many varied alternative solutions. I was forced to a tentative hypothesis: coursework in s. f. and fantasy, beginning as early as junior high school, could have armed virtually every media writing student with broader understandings of the people and events that shape our todays and tommorows. For a graduating college senior, this information comes a bit late. She should have been introduced to speculative fiction many years previously. I inferred without much comfort that there would be no time like the past.

In April, 1977, the M. A. T. E. Conference assuaged my concern; for I learned that Missouri schools are already leading seventh graders into the doubly alien lands of future problems and unconventional solutions. The motives of the schools are manifold and almost all, I think, cogent. For one thing, competence in language mechanics will surely increase when the student is actually encouraged to explain the alternate world he has created. It is **his** world, and he will work like Isher's weapon-makers to communicate it to us. He will also, not incidentally, reveal much of himself to those empathetic enough to read the invisible print. Modern psychoanalysis proceeds largely from Freud's mucking about in our private worlds. We must not overlook the ethical restrictions that apply when a student--perhaps for the first time--explicates her secret world in a class project. It might not be too much to suggest that the teacher who requires creative inputs in a class on s. f. and fantasy first attend a brief seminar with school counselors to sharpen perceptions of what may constitute significant fantasizing. Do **all** twelve-year-olds dream of packing their parents off to Pluto? Is it fruitful to crave elopement with a giant hamster? A plot may be vengeful or silly, but when orchestrated with the full diapason of a student's fantasy world it may explore a theme of great significance to its author.

Exploring themes is a popular approach to genre study. Some of the more familiar s.f. themes are time travel, holocaust, and immortality. My favorite, however, is the great catch-all, not properly speaking a theme at all but a springboard for themes. It is the category of "What if . . .?" To illustrate the contention that it is not a theme per se, one need only ask a few questions. What if we had time travel? What if the holocaust comes? What if mankind found immortality? "What if . . .?", then, may be a sort of supertheme, but surely it transcends a given theme.

Given that "What if . . .? is transcendent, one should be able to use it to explore themes little explicated in existing SF and fantasy. Let us examine one current technology for themes relatively unsullied by the great muddy boots of the SF writing cadre, and place the themes on the "What if . . .?" springboard. Architecture is a technology that has, since the 1940's, moved far beyond the confines of four walls. The

anthropologist E. T. Hall, in an architectural journal, long ago made provocative statements about the ways people use their living space. Americans shove furniture against their walls and face an inner space, while Japanese group their furniture in the center and face an outer space. What if we developed structures so flexible that they could be pushed, massaged, or otherweise magicked in almost limitless permutations? Imagine the kitchen brought momentarily outdoors (or the outdoors brought to the kitchen). Imagine an entire house fashioned like a bean-bag chair, its walls and floors so plastic they can surrogate chairs, tables, even become light sources. Such a dwelling might be marvelous. Or it could be a disaster, given the wrong conditions. Whatever else it might do, it would surely introduce a vast amount of entropy--that is to say, uncertainty about what comes next--in modern living. I label this theme **Entropic Architecture** and ask "What if we had it?", then carom off into another of the architect's arenas.

In England, architects have long recognized the profound effects of personal transport. The harried designers propose electric tramways in tubes, and even attempt to allay crowding by designing ever smaller automobiles--some hardly larger than powered roller skates. If Frank Lloyd Wright were alive today, would he extend his concept of organic architecture to the element of personal transport? In memoriam, I offer the theme **Organic Transport**. What if we could, by recombinant DNA or by rubbing a sinister jewel, create a great tree whose hollow root were large enough to transport people? Perhaps we could have the flow of sap propel us in capsules through tubes that are self-maintaining. Or, if it were a rubber tree, --but here we risk the farcial and, worse still, giving away too much. Perhaps it is enough to note that the plant kingdom is rich with peculiar means to transport seeds and nutrients. We can let students develop their own plots using this theme.

The creation of entirely new themes may seem a difficult assignment and, in terms of human motives, unlikely. Yet by recombining old ideas the student may happen across something modestly different. Let us term this trick **Recombinant Notions** and try it. Take, say, the hoary fantasy of summoning a demon--and apply it to angels. What services might the angel perform, and what might the exacted tribute be? We are comfortable with the cliches of bargaining with the powers of darkness, but we could be led into new philosophical paths when we consider bargaining with Powers of Light. Without being an apologist for any sect, one can recall that John Wesley did precisely that when he invented Methodism! New themes? In broad terms, perhaps not. In detail, it is the stuff of which writers are made; the province of the pro. And it is not all that difficult to initiate, using recombinant notions.

Finally, I would like to offer a small hindsight masquerading as insight. Most SF writers I know find it convenient to deny that they write with any significantly didactic purpose. They know that readers want entertainment, and probably fear wholesale desertion in the ranks of fandom should it be known that they are trying to inform, to prepare, or to motivate a mass of alert readers. Probably, most s.f. today is written only to entertain; but a few are driven to do other things as well. Larry Niven's **Ringworld** and Arthur Clark's stunning **Rendevous with Rama** both risk

ennui in the detail with which they describe fabricated life-support systems for entire civilizations. Scientists are already studying such proposals; readers of Niven and Clarke will not suffer cultural shock and they might even vote for funding. Several of my shorter works were planned with the pill of information first, the candy-coating of entertainment last. It is obvious that the candy must far outweigh the pill if one is to garner his six cents per word. What may not be obvious when we first meet them is that some of the "far-out" ideas we read today are metaphorically synchronous-orbit satellites: seriously proposed in SF and destined to be elegant new solutions to old problems.

The s.f.-oriented programs in Missouri schools can hardly avoid being a success in terms of preparing tomorrow's problem-solvers by provoking them today with challenges by the SF fans of yesterday. For useful study of alternatives, there's no time like the past/present/future.

THE HONORS PROGRAM IN ENGLISH AT CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL ST. JOSEPH MISSOURI

by Virginia F. Frazier

Let me state categorically that I am deeply committed to the concept of an Honors Program in high school. Not all teachers, parents, administrators or even all students believe that the talented and gifted need special programs. No one would deny the right of the physically or mentally handicapped child to an education that will help him/her to reach the full potential. Why do we deny or ignore the rights of the students with special talents and gifts?

Let me share twenty years of experience in an Honors Program with you. The term "Honors" sometimes conjures visions of Ichabod Cranish kids with Einstein intellects. Not so. In secondary schools, students involved in Honors Programs are delightful (usually), dedicated (frequently), and devilish (sometimes). But so are all kids. What distinguishes the student in an Honors Program is that he/she has an extra measure of intellectual ability, a desire to learn in depth, to become independent, and to pursue special interests. More often than not, the student is college bound, is highly self-motivated, and wishes to excel. Physically, such students are often outstanding. Indeed, students in Honors are frequently involved in such school activities as sports, music, dramatics, journalism, student government. The best essayist or poet may also be a top-notch science student, a member of the Math Team, a swimming or tennis star.

That some students (approximately 2-5 per cent) have considerable potential is nothing startlingly new. But what is startling is how little is really done nationwide to help the gifted. Not until the passage of House Bill 474 did Missouri make mandatory at least some aid to gifted and talented children. (I often use the terms interchangeably, although the Bill uses the terms "Gifted and Talented.") Nationwide, our efforts to provide for the gifted are comparable to offering a piglet to a starving python!

In some school systems, the Honors classes are labeled A. P. (Advanced Placement), provided the students will all take the A. P. test of the College Entrance Examination Board. One excellent Illinois school uses numbers to designate the level of difficulty, with Level 5 as the most difficult. A California district designates the program "The Able Learners Program" (A. L. P.).

Perhaps what follows on the background, philosophy, identification and scheduling of students, and qualities of both teachers and students in Honors will help, if you wish to start or revive such a program.

OVERVIEW

In an attempt to provide for individual differences in students, Central High School has long had a program for really able students in English and other academic subjects. The program has been designated by different names through the years. At one time, all students were sectioned into X, Y, Z courses (ability grouped tracking). In the early 1960's, the district's Assistant Superintendent in charge of instruction implemented a program called the Academically Talented Program (A. T.). Through the years, the A. T. label has been lost and the classes are popularly known as the "Honors." A more accurate title would be the Program of Weighted Courses, as the classes in English carry extra grade points for A, B, C, D grades. (Not all teachers agree with the weighted grades, nor do all students.) On official transcripts, Honors courses are marked with an asterisk to correspond with an explanatory legend. The English classes include Honors English I, English II, English III, and English Literature, the first three of which fulfill the requirement for three years in English. The fourth (English Literature) is an elective class for college preparatory students. At the present time, we average four or five sections at each level. The number varies from year to year. All are year courses. This year, we are adding a weighted course in composition for seniors. Our new schedule will designate the Honors classes as "A W." Five teachers are scheduled for Honors English.

Once on the program, a student with teacher recommendation and/or parental consent may leave the program, preferably at the end of a semester and not before the end of a quarter. Changing from the Honors to the Elective English Program without valid reason is discouraged. Teachers in the Elective Program frequently recommend good students for the Honors Program.

PHILOSOPHY

The administration and the teachers at Central High School believe that each student should be taught according to his needs, insofar as those needs can be determined and insofar as our present resources permit. We believe we have an obligation to all students, and that we must not neglect the students with intellectual gifts and special talents. We do not believe in a "program" which sets these students "above" others. Rather, we believe in a challenging program open to all students who wish to try the classes. We believe students with special talents and gifts should be encouraged but not forced to take classes that will challenge them and

help to develop their talents. We are fully aware that the whole responsibility for these students does not belong to the school alone, but we believe that the school has a basic obligation to such students.

Further, we believe that students taking classes in Honors English should be well counseled by the Counseling staff, with the cooperation of parents and teachers.

IDENTIFYING THE STUDENTS

It is suggested that a variety of methods--not simply I. Q.--be used in identifying these students:

1. Test scores as only one means of identification.
2. Observations and referrals of teachers.
3. Grade records and past performance.
4. Observations which the student himself makes about needs, goals, abilities.
5. Comments from the student and his peers.
6. Discussion with parents.
7. Consistently high level of performance and production.

SCHEDULING THE STUDENTS

The responsibility for scheduling the students into classes in Honors English rests chiefly with the previous teacher and the counselors, who:

1. Avail themselves of all possible means of identification, encouraging the students to select courses from a broad range of course offerings, one of which should be English each year.
2. Make the students fully aware of the courses available and the particular nature of these courses, encouraging able students to "try" the program.
3. De-emphasize the weighted grades and emphasize the challenge and nature of the course.

PHILOSOPHY FOR TEACHERS OF HONORS ENGLISH CLASSES

The teachers of Honors English classes must not see themselves as "special," nor see these students as "better" than others. In a democratic society, such a schism is impossible. The teacher must respect the student's mind and special abilities. He must feel no rivalry between himself and the student. He must encourage mutual respect among students and not be guilty of fostering rivalries. He needs to provide an atmosphere of freedom with discipline. The teacher must like this particular kind of student and be prepared to cope with a wide range of differences and behavorial patterns. He should be especially trained for this work through his own interests in things intellectual and cultural and the richness and variety of his own experience. He must be innovative, creative, flexible, open-minded, willing to probe and to foster a spirit of inquiry. He must de-emphasize grades but grade fairly on achievement, production, and progress, using no curves and maintaining realistic standards.

THE SUPERIOR STUDENT

1. Possesses a long attention-span
2. Enjoys being creative and independent, with special interest in analogies and figures of speech
3. Understands complex directions and can supply his own
4. Is curious about many subjects, develops his own motivation, enjoys words
5. Analyzes and discriminates, organizes and develops
6. Learns through his own mistakes--may be sensitive and self-critical
7. Relates thoughts, illustrations and problems to real life situations; is interested in philosophy and benefits from mature reading
8. Is energetic, self-directive, resourceful, capable of pursuing and profiting from a lengthy or long-term assignment
9. Is capable of abstract thinking--employs symbols and metaphors and understands the significance.

Central High School has a complete course book entitled **The English Program at Central High School**. We can lend course books to anyone interested in seeing exactly what the content and method of our courses include. But any school must tailor a program to fit the needs of its own school and community.

The national out-cry for "Basics" would seem to me to include Honors Programs. They are basic to the education of our brightest and best. We fail the nation if we fail to provide for these children. Each year when school starts, I re-read these words by Daniel Webster, for I need to be reminded that I am working with "men's immortal minds."

> If we work upon marble, it will perish.
> If we work upon brass, time will efface it.
> If we rear temples, they will crumble to dust.
> But if we work upon men's immortal minds,
> If we imbue them with high principles,
> With just fear of God and love of their fellow man,
> We engrave on those tablets something which no time can efface,
> And which will brighten and brighten to all eternity.

As I wrote that, I remembered over two thousand "immortal minds" I have touched in my twenty years at Central; and that is humbling indeed!

HUMANITIES IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM

by Conrad Stawski

Author's Note:

> In trying to present information on the Columbia Public Schools' program in humanities within the framework of the MATE Spring Conference theme at Columbia, "Tradition and the Popular Arts," I tried to rely mainly on materials which I had used over the years in teaching our course, Humanities. I therefore modified a two-day lecture, "Subject in Art: Its Sources and Types," and added a piece of music, Penderecki's "Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima." I tried to show how one must work in teaching appreciation of the visual arts not only with well known paintings and sculpture, but with the modern and contemporary. This paper is thus an attempt to synthesize a visual presentation.
>
> C. S.

Penderecki's tense, high pitched "Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima," with its nervously chattering strings lamenting the debacle not only of the devasted city, but perhaps also over the dilemma of modern man generally, is a good point from which to approach the antipodes of tradition and modernity. Played on traditional strings, the "Threnody" is a far cry from the sonorities usually produced by those instruments, and the eerie, demanding stridencies of the piece is like so much else of modern art. It insists that the audience be forced to think, to respond, to interact. With the experience of the "Threnody" as an introduction, we can begin viewing some traditional and some more recent paintings by way of slide projection. Da Vinci's "Last supper," known since childhood by virtually every student brings immediate responses from a class. A discussion of the painting's significance, history, and structure almost invariably amazes with the degree of sophistication among students about the work, perhpas as a result of viewing a recent TV series on the painter. Usually one or more will know about the great Florentine's disastrous technical problems in trying to handle fresco in a new way and the resultant failure of the paint. The instability of the pigment led to restorations and repairs over the years to such an extent that Leonardo's conception is no longer truly his work. In addition, students frequently are quite knowledgeable about, or at least can be drawn into seeing, the almost geometrical structure of the famous scene: the grouping of the disciples in threes and the resultant classical symmetry, with six on either side of Christ, who as the central figure becomes the structural focus in other ways, too. He is framed by the middle of the three windows behind the table, and his figure describes an equilateral triangle. Perhaps most remarkable of all about the composition is da Vinci's use of linear

perspective: with Christ's head as the focus, the lines of the painting radiate away from it, separating walls from ceiling, marking the panels on the wall, describing the edges of the table, and defining the decoration of the floor in mosaic. Students will see the composition, then as an exercise in the intellectual approach to painting, an approach beloved by the renaissance as a triumph of the rational mind. Beyond this coolly analytical treatment, the figure of Christ is also the dramatic center: most of the disciples' hands and eyes draw attention to Jesus, the window framing him is emphasized by the ornamental pediment above it, and the light of the landscape behind him is radiant about his head. The math students will perhaps see the equilateral triangle enclosing him as having symbolic value in reference to proportion. And the serenity on his face is again a statement in classic composure.

Religion, of course, is the source of this famous painting and of much of the world's art. Having made this point, the teacher should comment on the relative value of subject matter in art, for this becomes a matter of utmost importance in moving from traditional to modern. The scene which da Vinci presents is hallowed by centuries of Christian tradition and the effects of the cultural context which produced it must be properly recognized. Taken out of this context--if, for example, the da Vinci fresco could somehow be removed to a Melanesian village--the painting would be met with confusion if not indifference, or even hostiliy. In such a society, it would just not register. Or, let's transport the painting elsewhere. In the context of Islamic culture the painting is simply not possible, for the Koran specifically proscribes realistic, anthropomorphic portrayal of the deity. Tradition has had a further curious effect on us in relationship to da Vinci's theme. Show a slide of another painter's treatment, Tintoretto's chiaroscuro tour de force of his "Last Supper" at San giorgio Maggiore, for example, and students are slow to recognize the subject.. It's not **the** "Last Supper." The **famous** "Last Supper" by Leonardo has become synonymous with the very event; another version by another artist seems almost an intrusion, an incorrect statement of an ingrained reality. So thoroughly has da Vinci's treatment ingrained itself in the consciousness of the Western World's art and religion that it excludes other interpretations. Yet, students should be made aware that any painter who was anybody in the renaissance painted a last supper. Tradition in art, then, can have an overwhelming influence in shaping our receptivity not only toward art but of religious ideas as well.

In the period preceding da Vinci's era, medieval tradition excluded from art those subjects not grounded in religion. The notion of a portrait, as such, was not consistent with the thinking of the time, with its stress on the immaterial and the afterlife. The medieval mind considered not the individual but his relationship to the Creator's great scheme, instead. What better way to teach some of the implications of the renaissance, then, but to go once again to da Vinci, this time for what is certainly Western civilization's best known portrait, the famous "Mona Lisa."

Portraiture is one of the distinctions of the new way of looking at things in the rebirth of learning, a return to viewing the individual as having value in an earthly, material existence. The "Mona Lisa" is a secular painting. In the Middle Ages ordinary persons were not represented, even though some late medieval artists might have portrayed a donor in the corner of a scene gazing reverently at a madonna and child, the real subjects of the painting. But with the changed attitudes of the renaissance, a "Mona Lisa" as a separate and distinct subject becomes possible. With this painting, too, students will show some considerable knowledge and appreciation. They have heard or read about the famous smile (English teachers here will be unable to resist teaching a vocabulary item: the "enigmatic" smile) and some will have interesting notions explaining the subject's expression. Yet, a more curious mystery about the painting is apt to go unnoticed, the oddly mismatched halves of the background beyond the subject's head. Thus, we can see again how tradition has shaped our responses and acceptances, granting to one element of the painting a significance beyond the value of the total composition. Four hundred years of critical and popular approval lie behind the portrait and almost without exception we proclaim it a "Masterpiece," not noticing the strangely constructed background.

We have seen how the renaissance turned artists' consideration once again to the earthly and the material, away from the medieval preoccupation with the heavenly and the unsubstantial. In more modern times, painters in great number have made dramatic revolutions in attitudes about subject matter for paintings. In academic painting for two hundred years and more beyond the renaissance, proper subject matter was royalty, legend, myth, history, religion. The Impressionists and their progeny changed all that. A still life by Cezanne of fruits arranged on a table removes the emphasis from the heroic or divine and takes a **neutral** subject, devoid of "significance," and renders the objects not so much as a realistic portrayal but as an analysis of forms in space. Similarly, the German expressionist Franz Hofer in his "Women with Squashes" is not concerned with carefully presenting female subjects in the manner of da Vinci's famous portrayal of his smiling woman, but is instead playing with the triangle as a compositional base. An analysis of the painting shows not only the dominant triangle described by the two women but also an almost countless repetition of triangular forms, scores of them, scattered throughout the whole of the painting, a veritable theme and variations in visual art. It is instructive to students to have them look at a slide containing an analysis sketch of the compositional arrangement and thus to see again that subject is a relative thing, for there is no significance to the two women as personages. They are merely something for the artist to paint, just as he might arrange squashes by themselves on a tabletop for a still life.

To dramatize still further the relative importance of subject matter and the impact of tradition and culture upon the thinking of artists as they

reflect societal attitudes, let us look at a series of five treatments of women: the famous "Christina's World," de Hooch's "Woman Weighing Gold," another painting similarly titled, by deHooch's contemporary, Jan Vermeer, Picasso's "Sylvette," and Wilhelm de Kooning's savagely powerful "Woman, IV."

Perhaps the best known piece by a living American, Andrew Wyeth's "Christina's World" can lead to almost a full period of discussion and analysis by students. When asked to find elements which disturb or disquiet the viewer, they will with little prodding usually spill out spontaneously information like the following: Christina, isolated in the foreground, is the only person in the picture and is shown from her back, an unusual treatment of a title figure in a painting; the desolate, apparently abandoned dwelling, with its deeply shadowed windows and apparent neglect, is not the place to attract one; Christina's attitude seems to show her at one and the same time compelled toward the house and yet braced against the ground, as though determined not to go toward the building; physically she presents a distinct contrast between a normal development of pelvis and torso and her limbs, for her legs are bent under her and her arms, thrust out against the ground, are thin and emaciated, almost insect like, and the hands are bony and twisted, clawlike and unfeminine.

Other unusual or disturbing features are the directionless, overgrown ruts in the field, the ladder leaning against the house and throwing an improbable shadow, the partially mowed field, the flat, one dimensional outbuilding perched precariously, as it were, on the far edge of the scene, as though in danger of being toppled off over the horizon. In the field in which Christina lies, Wyeth has delineated with meticulous care multitudinous blades of grass in a landscape otherwise devoid of vegetation--no trees, no shrubs, no crops. All of this in a stillness which seems haunted by some vague presence, a force manifested solely, perhaps, in the disarray of the subject's hair, as if, agitating nothing else, it reaches out for her. And off in the distance, not clearly visible in the slide reproduction, a flight of crows wheels over the barn in the distance. The students jump on **that** bit of symbolism with enthusiasm. Thus freighted with imagery that broods and suggests, Wyeth's painting is not the traditional treatment of a female subject, a piece far different from da Vinci's famous enigma and its curious background--whatever, if anything, Leonardo meant anything by it. And Wyeth's picture is still a far different piece--whatever, if anything, he meant by **his** picture.

Now, let us have students look at a pair of women, subjects of two Dutch artists of the seventeenth century. De Hooch's version shows a person as she stands below a casement window in a room clearly lighted. She is at work using a jeweler's balance, weighing out some precious stuff. The composition is straightforward and open, not particularly freighted with significance, a typical **genre** scene beloved by the Dutch of the time and an

indication of Holland's enfranchisement of a middle class engaged in the country's already established position in the jewelry trade, which it dominates still today. To demonstrate the relative value of subject and to show again how two artists can take very divergent approaches to the same subject, let us look at Vermeer's singularly different "Woman Weighing Gold." It is almost as if we can hear Vermeer saying, "Hey, that's a pretty good picture," of de Hooch's canvas, "but let me show you what a real artist can do with that idea." Placing his subject in almost the same position relative to a window, Vermeer modulates the light, allowing a soft radiance to fall full upon the subject's face and body. Lost in contemplation, sweetly pensive, the woman in the Vermeer composition is dramatized far beyond the person in the de Hooch. Aside from the light on her and her task, the room is otherwise in darkness, obscurely allowing only limited details to be vaguely seen. Beyond her on the wall is a hanging which seems to suggest a last judgment scene, so popular with artists of times past. After allowing the students to look carefully at this painting and then switching back and forth on the slide projector between the two versions of the scene, students can be asked about the relative meaning of subject in each. Which artist invests his subject with more significance? What does Vermeer really mean with a woman **weighing** gold? What can the word **weighing** mean? How does he dramatize the notion? The responses usually take into consideration what has been mentioned above, especially in reference to the chiaroscuro effects of the lighting emphasizing the subject. And then, finally, the teacher must recognize the undercurrent of buzzing among the students in the classroom. Of Course. The woman in the Vermeer is pregnant. No mistaking that as the light falls not only on her face but on her body as well. So--what is she thinking of? About her child? About the relative value of life as against material things? Is a life as precious as the yellow metal? And so these two traditional paintings can help students see again that an artist may place much or little emphasis on subject matter.

But let us go further into the matter of tradition and departures from it in the treatment of women as subjects. Picasso, working in less realistic fashion than the foregoing, makes a cubistic study of a young girl in his painting entitled "Sylvette." Though distorted across several planes, it nevertheless gives the viewer a sweet and sympathetic study of the youthful person who is his subject.

In glaring contrast, Wilhelm de Kooning gives us a shockingly modern look at the female in his "Woman, IV." With a twisted leer on her brutal (brutalized?) face, she stands glaring defiantly, aggressively, her features twisted and distorted, as though daring the viewer to make some kind of sympathetic communion. Why does a modern artist abstract from this idea of woman, this twisted, torn creature. Why, students can be asked, does de Kooning paint in a vein that da Vinci, de Hooch, or Vermeer would never have dreamed of? What leads a modern painter to twist the exterior, visual reality of this female into malevolent aggressiveness? Da

Vinci and Michelangelo and the other great names of the renaissance and masters from Vermeer to Rembrandt, to Gainsborough and through Renoir would not conceive of a woman in this way--indeed, **could not** paint a woman like that. The questions above are important. Their answers pull students into understanding their own time as their age is portrayed by its artists. They must be coaxed and gentled into providing the answers. What great thinker of modern times has produced a whole new way of looking at human beings and of understanding them? The answer might come slowly, but it can be drawn out. Sigmund Freud. Freud's work has given to modern artists a view of people from the inside. (How would da Vinci respond to still newer ways of seeing--to suggest a subject for other discussion--slow motion, photomontage, stop action, instant replay, microphotography?) Before Freud, the others like da Vinci and Rembrandt had seen womankind as guardian of the morals, keeper of the home, wife, mother, nurse, protectress. She was a figure to be idealized and put on a pedestal. At least so it was in art--if not in real life. Freud's contribution led not only painters but novelists, all modern artists, to see the exterior reality as covering the vast, mysterious, awesome reality of the mind, frequently a twisted, untidy mass of passions, repressions, or libidinous impulses, hidden or partly understood, working not in neat Aristotelian beginnings and endings, but halting, circuitious, spontaneous, overlapping, defying causality and chronology. And society's way of looking at women, too, has changed. And, for better or for worse, women have been torn from--or they have fled from--the home to compete with men in a materialistic, mechanized society that can corrupt and twist. Is this why de Kooning shows us a harried, alienated harriden, slashed across and blotched, torn painfully into a lost and agonized creature?

So far the concern has been with the treatment of **subject** in painting from the traditional to the modern. But what of painters like Mondrian and Jackson Pollack, who frustratingly leave out subject entirely? In "Composition with Red, Yellow, and blue" Mondrian gives us a picture devoid of subject, coolly intellectual, reduced to absolute classical simplicity. It is the essence of painting: line, color, space. These are, finally, what every painter works with.

Space for this article does not allow fuller detail in introducing the student to understanding modern art except to say that they can see the continuing direction of growth into the popular visual arts by briefly examining some of Picasso's junk sculpture. "Baboon Mother and Child" is a great visual pun using a discarded toy automobile as the mother's head and a huge lard kettle for the pot bellied creature's abdomen. Students can thus see that artists sometimes laugh at the world and at themselves. The word "art" is not always solemnly pronounced with a capital "A" and a post vocalic "r"--it is not, should not, be treated in impressively hushed and reverential tones as "Ahht." For art in our times, especially in its more popular forms, is apt to be brash, resounding

with laughter, jeering at academicians and the gallery-goers--even at art itself. Beyond Picasso, a whole generation of sculptors has reduced forms or has found them as castoffs to be recombined in new forms. Witness some of the Funk artists of a decade ago: Arneson's ceramic typewriter, Julio Gonzalez's "Woman Combing Her Hair," Voulkos' hilarious "Woman." What about other sculptures that in mechanical perversity inflate, wheeze, clank, grind, or flash? Or just lie there, limply plastic?

Again, for better or for worse, the human experience has led many artists to sneer at tradition. Perhaps in this most materialistic of all ages **things** are to be ridiculed. What, after all, is plastic worth?

For those of us in the humanities classroom or elsewhere who find Christo's wrapping up of the Chicago Art Institute or his draping of Southern California confusing, who see Claes Oldenburg's soft typewriter or his light switches annoying or irrelevant, or who find Francis Bacons' hideous painted distortions repugnant, there is not much comfort, no immediate relief. Of course, we can heigh ourselves and our students off to the nearest art museum and admire the Rembrandts and Watteaus. But, if it's a really good museum, it will have one or more rooms where paintings are distorted and where sculptures, in mechanical perversity, wheeze and clank and . . .